

At Double Tee Ranch

By FRANK H. SWEET

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"No man can win me until he proves himself a better cowboy than I am!" flashed the girl. Then, as her gaze swept over the assembled outfit of the Double Tee ranch, she broke into a ringing, scornful laugh. But the men felt there had been more than jest in her words. Harry-faced Tom Higlow—Woolley Dog Tom—placed his hand over his heart.

"There's plenty of sentiment, Miss Tensie," he remarked scornfully, "and it implies as boys here—considerable, seeing four of us have asked you to marry since you stood here on the horse. Now in justice to the Double Tee outfit we'd ask you to name the conditions and cards. If it's to round up a stampeding herd—single-handed or ride a locust horse?"

"I don't think the man's among you, Mr. Woolley," interrupted the girl. "If you'll hurry Pete up with that note I'll be going. I could have written a dozen answers in this time. There he comes now."

A cowboy was emerging from the ranch shack, and following him was the new owner, fresh from the east and immaculate in a tailor-made cowboy costume. He was a handsome fellow and came forward quickly, doffing his hat.

"Tell your father I am awfully obliged to him for his neighborhood, Miss Neuman," he said, "and that he can depend upon me to be at the ranchmen's meeting. I want to identify myself with the country now. That note will explain about the horses. I'm sorry to have kept you waiting so long, but there seemed to be no paper or pencils in the outfit."

Tensie Neuman took the note and bowed, then touched her horse lightly. As she swept away the curiosity in the new owner's eyes was mingled with surprised admiration.

"A magnificent girl!" he ejaculated involuntarily. But Robson, the foreman, was near enough to hear him.

"Yes," he said quietly, "you don't see such girls in the east, Mr. Rand, and even here on the plains Miss Tensie is an exception."

"She's a goddess!" agreed Mr. Rand enthusiastically. Then he swung suddenly to the outfit, his face darkening. "Look here, men!" he cried hotly. "I don't like the way you talked to that girl. It was positively insulting. Why, I heard four of you proposing to all the girls right here in the presence of all the rest, and you were in earnest."

"In dead earnest," assented Woolley Dog Tom pathetically—"the dearest kind of earnest. An' I have myself heard the same four propose to her individually an' collectively more times than I've got fingers an' toes an' generally in the presence of witnesses. An' why not? Everybody knows every cuss here loves her, an' 'ain't nothin' to be ashamed of. Lord, Mr. Rand, we've been acquainted with Miss Tensie ever since her father brought her to this ranch two years ago, an' we've been proposing to her on all chances an' occasions through the twenty-four months. I'd have asked her to marry me today only these coyotes kept their everlasting jaws going."

"What gets me," said Wild Smith gently, "is how she snaps out sometimes, just like now. Maybe we ought to draw her off by herself, boys, an' not speak out so in a group. Maybe gals like proposing to be private rehearsals."

"Not Miss Tensie," declared Woolley Dog Tom authoritatively. "It's practice for her to say so in different ways. She's bound to like it. Lord, I'd rather hear her say no than any other gal yes! It's worth proposin' just to have her eyes on one and her attention for a minute. And that's the way we all feel. Every cuss in this outfit has been proposin' to her, except Robson there, an' he don't propose to nobody. He's too all-fired dried up. Now, Mr. Rand—"

"Never mind bringing me in," said Mr. Rand shortly. "No girl cares to be proposed to in that way, much less a girl like Miss Neuman. You cowboys—"

"Are as fine a lot of men as there are in the world," finished the foreman briskly. "I am glad you feel that way about us, Mr. Rand, especially as you are to become a cowboy in a way, yourself. Miss Tensie regards us in the same manner, for she knows that any one in the outfit would give his life freely to save her from danger, and that is more than many of the well-dressed men east would do. The mere fact of her having to familiarize us with the word 'NO' detracts nothing from the warm feeling between her and the outfit. And, yes, I will add that, contrary to Mr. Woolley Dog Tom's belief, I proposed to her myself more than a year ago and was refused. Now—sharply—all of you scatter to the upper range and relieve the boys there. Keep an extra keen lookout for the wolves are around again and liable to cause another bad stampede. Miss Tensie rode that way, you know, and brave and familiar with cattle as she is, I wouldn't like her to get in front of a stampede when wolves were behind. I don't think there is any real danger, of course, or I would have warned her. Wolves are not apt to venture out till night, but I shall go along."

There had not been a serious stampede for several weeks, though scattering wolves were seen almost daily along the edge of the foothills. At night the cowboys were unusually vigilant, with occasional fires built at dan-

gerous points, and so the wolves had been kept back. And it was at night alone that danger was apprehended. But the wolves had been growing hungry, and with hunger came boldness. An hour's riding, with ten miles left behind, and the cowboys saw the figure which they had only tried to keep within sight whirl suddenly and come toward them. A few moments later came a dull vibration of the earth which caused Robson to throw his horse forward, with a curse.

"Ride, boys!" he yelled. "Stampeding cattle, and you know, Miss Tensie's horse came thirty miles from her father's ranch this morning, and is too exhausted to lead a stampede driven by wolves. Ride as you never did before. Sweep in between her and the cattle and then turn, and, if need be, every one of you die before a horn touches her horse."

"To blame with you!" cried Woolley Dog Tom wrathfully. "What reason have you to say that? Ain't we all proposed to her last?"

But Tensie was a mile away, and before that distance was lessened by half the stampede had swept over the slope behind and was closing in on her. A quarter of a mile, and the clashing horns were less than a dozen yards away; an eighth, and they were at her horse's flank.

Robson's face was set in rigid lines. He had ridden many miles also that morning, and his horse was not so fresh as his companions, but by sheer force of will he pushed the animal ahead of the others, two, three, four lengths, and when the clashing horns closed in upon Tensie's horse he was less than twenty yards away. But no power on earth could now check his terrific speed in advance of the crush-

ing stampede. A second, and his arm rose steadily and unerringly. There were two sharp reports, and then the cattle obliterated them. A seeming truce may sometimes check or divide an avalanche. Almost simultaneously with the reports the two frenzied animals that were crowding upon Tensie's horse fell, and instinctively the cattle directly behind swerved a little to the right and left to avoid them. Others followed, and thus a narrow path was left through the stampede.

After the cattle had passed Tensie looked at her companion. His hand was grasping her arm, and she noticed that it trembled. Her own face was white, but her eyes had softened. "Dick," she whispered, "you are a better cowboy than I am."

Blind Justice.

Captain Joe Nicholson, to memory dear in Detroit, used to tell of a long time prisoner who had been in the house of correction while the captain ran that institution.

Just before his term expired the convict called the captain and told him that justice was now done and that an honest man would start fresh in the world. "But you have told me several times that you were innocent of the charge on which you were sent here."

"So I was, Captain Joe, and I can prove it. Here are the names of three witnesses. Get their statement and see whether I'm lying."

Just as a matter of curiosity the captain complied and found convincing evidence of the man's innocence. The convict was called in and indignantly asked why he had not used his evidence in getting a new trial.

"I'll tell you, captain. In my time I was acquitted three or four times when I was guilty, so when I was convicted of something I never did I just thought I'd even things up by taking my medicine without kicking. Besides that, it sort of tickled me to find that justice had missed me at every shot."—Detroit Journal.

Too Logical.

Mr. Blank, head of the great business of Blank & Son, regularly scanned the attendance book, noting punctuality or otherwise. His son was the greatest offender, and he wrote across his entries, "Mr. George Blank keeps very bad time."

Mr. George, "bluffing," appended to this remark, "Time was made for slaves," and laughed much among the higher employees at his wit. On the 1st of each month the cashier handed each employee his check in a sealed envelope. Mr. George was always eager for his, having expensive tastes of all kinds.

On the next payment after his rejoinder he opened his envelope and found a slip of paper on which was written: "Time was made for slaves. Time is money. But Mr. George Blank is not a slave; therefore he requires no money."

Mr. George, who was a university man, avowed that despite his former studies he found this proposition too logical for him.—London Answers.

A Sad Reminder.

A story is told by the writer of "Some Stories of the Concert Platform" concerning Mme. Patey, the famous English contralto. The singer was delighting a large audience in the town hall at Birmingham when a workman at the rear of the building was observed to be in tears. There was nothing in the words to account for this display of feeling, and had this been otherwise the famed prima donna was singing in the Italian tongue. But the grief of the man became more pronounced ere Mme. Patey had concluded. At length, amid a thunder of applause, the singer retired, and the stranger was asked the reason of his grief.

"She reminds me so of my daughter," said the tearful one. "She was in the singin' line."

"But surely your daughter could not sing like that?" queried the man in the next seat.

"No," answered the mourner, with another sob; "but you never could tell what she was singin' about!"

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Story of the Duke of Athall and the
Cartoonist Leech.

Many years ago a Duke of Athall was held up to execration in Punch for shutting up Glen Tilt and forbidding all trespassing under pains and penalties. This recalls a good story about John Leech, told by himself at a dinner given by his friend Millais, at which Landseer and Thackeray were present. It was Leech "who held up to execration" the Duke of Athall. Look in Punch of 1850 and you will see the old nobleman there depicted as a savage, snarling hound and underneath the picture the words "A Scotch Dog in the Manger." This is followed by another pleasantry at the expense of the duke, who in a scene from the burlesque performed at Glen Tilt is made to say, "These are Glen Athall's warriors true, and Saxons, I'm the regular Doo."

Some time after this Leech, making a summer tour in Scotland, found himself toward nightfall walking "in the unpropaned leather of Glen Tilt," scared to dukes and deer, and presently met, face to face, the hound on horseback, attended by a groom. "Is it possible," his grace exclaimed, "that I have the pleasure of meeting John Leech?"

The artist, disconcerted, explained that it was growing late and he was on his way to the village inn to stay the night. The duke would not hear of this and, ordering his groom to dismount and help the artist into the saddle, insisted that the latter should go with him to the hall. Leech was overpowered by the old gentleman's kindness, and, as no refusal would be listened to, he accepted it. But he was still a little nervous. The duke noticed it, and it seemed to please him.

On arriving at a narrow and rather dangerous path skirting a precipice, seeing his companion hold back, he gruffly told him to advance. "Now," thought poor Leech, "he'll have his revenge." The duke spoke out, "Are you the man who slandered me in Punch?" he sternly demanded. The artist felt his heart sink within him. He looked down from the dizzy height and thought of his wife and children. There was but one thing for him to do. He made a full confession and a full apology, and the old gentleman, hearing succeeded in thoroughly reassuring him, magnanimously forgave him. Host and guest dined at the hall, and dinner was ordered. Leech was shown to his dressing room, where he patiently awaited the sound of the gong. Hour after hour went by, and no sound came. He began to suspect that the duke's revenge was not complete and that he was being held a prisoner. He rang the bell.

It was answered by a scornful lackey. "I am afraid," said Leech, "that the dinner gong has sounded and I have not heard it. Is dinner ready?" "Sir," replied the pompous stunk, "when dinner is ready you will hear the gong." And disappeared. Another hour went by. He rang the bell. The stunk entered. The same inquiry was made, and the same reply was given. Leech gave up in despair. But at last came 10 o'clock and with it the looked for music of the gong. Dinner was served. It appeared that the duke had taken his usual nap and, being fatigued by the day's hunting, had overslept himself, and no one in the house had presumed to awake him.—New York Herald.

Northumbrian and Scotch Rustics.

The Northumbrian peasant is not at all Scotch. On the contrary, the ancient antipathies between England and Scotland were keenest on the borders. They are still alive there. As soon as you cross the Tweed the difference becomes apparent. First there is the dialect. To a Londoner it is all Scotch, and there's an end of the matter. But there are several important points of difference. You find one exemplified in words such as home, stone, one, etc. The Scot says hame, stane, ane, but the Northumbrian h'y'm, st'y'n, y'n—I fear only those who have heard it will be able to give that "y" its proper sound. And then the inimitable bur! One has to give up in despair all attempts to represent it phonetically, just as one cannot in letters represent the pronunciation of "me" and similar words. But it is all English of a sort and not Scotch. Still more striking is the difference in facial expression. The typical Scot is naturally reserved, not to say shy and self-controlled, his face is something of a mask through which the true man peers at his neighbor. A southern peasant is polite, civil, respectful, cap touching, is awe of the squire and the quality. In Northumbria you will find the peasant franker than the Scot, of more independent bearing than is common south of the Tweed. His faults—rudeness and brusqueness.—London Spectator.

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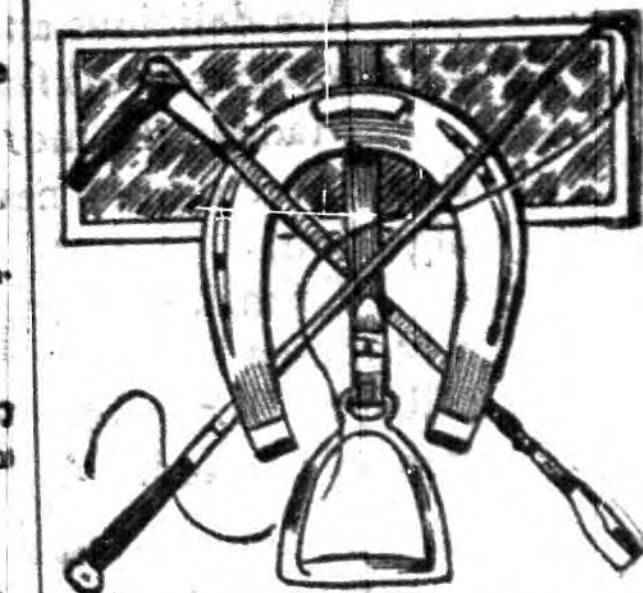
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